

ABR PROJECT AT CITY HALL – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Background and Scope:

Amesbury City Hall is a difficult building to navigate if you are disabled, elderly or otherwise have limited mobility. The 19th century building, and former armory, has 6 steps up to the front door and the first floor. Once in this hallway, a visitor faces five steps down to the auditorium or the option to take one of two stairwells to the majority of city offices located on the second floor. The City Hall auditorium is a major meeting space for city boards and commissions and the monthly City Council meetings. In acknowledgement of the need to improve access to this meeting space, the City constructed a wheelchair ramp to the side entrance of the auditorium.

The City of Amesbury completed an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan in November 2017. ([Att. 301: ADA Transition Plan](#)) The Transition Plan found the design and condition of the existing wheelchair ramp to the auditorium to be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Plan found the cross slope on the ramp, the threshold height on the entry door and the designated handicapped parking spot were all in violation of ADA standards. The ramp and entry door, as originally designed and constructed, were *never* ADA compliant. The ramp has many shortcomings beyond its violation of ADA design standards. The railing system is out of plumb due to vehicles hitting it and it is rusting where it meets the ramp. The deteriorated concrete ramp has chunks of the structure missing and is badly stained by the rusting railings ([Att. 302: Existing Conditions Photos](#)). Further, the entry door at the top of the ramp is often unusable during winter months, as melting snow on the roof of City Hall slides off, lands on the ramp, and refreezes – effectively blocking the door when someone tries to open it.

Though non-compliant and in a state of deterioration, the ramp does provide some limited functionality in aiding entry to the building. In an effort to assist residents who cannot climb stairs, the City placed a desk with a phone in the auditorium so people can call staff for assistance and receive service. However, this programmatic solution is only minimally effective because there is not a clear path of travel to the auditorium for wheelchair-bound residents due to the non-compliant ramp. Additionally, it is not possible to programmatically address the many public hearings and meetings that are held in the auditorium.

An architecturally compliant ramp is the only way to provide equal access to the auditorium – and, essentially, town government as a whole – for all residents. The City contracted with the firm Kessler McGuinness & Associates to prepare plans and a cost estimate for the construction of a fully ADA-compliant ramp and entrance to City Hall. The project is currently in the design development stage. The drawings include plan views, elevation views, construction details and material specifications. The plans were prepared to a sufficient level of detail they could be used to determine a detailed cost estimate and can easily be brought to a bid-ready level.

The scope of work includes:

- Demolishing the existing ramp and railing
- Cutting the asphalt paving to prepare for a new frost wall; excavation for frost wall; installation of footing and pouring of concrete for frost wall
- Installation of a pre-fabricated vestibule into the existing brick
- Installation of proper draining for the ramp
- Installation of glass doors, frame, etc.
- Wiring and installation of two new powered door operators, vestibule heater, and vestibule lights
- Installation of steel railing and bollard
- Interior and exterior painting

The City can begin implementing the project immediately upon notice of a grant award beginning with the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a grant management consultant. Once hired, the consultant will assist the City with the procurement of an architect to prepare bid-ready plans and specifications for the project. All procurement procedures (grant management consultant, architect and construction contractor) will be performed in conformance with 2 CFR Part 200 and all applicable Massachusetts procurement requirements. The procurement process for architectural services will take approximately one month. Once under contract, the architect should be able to prepare the final design plans and bid specifications within eight weeks. The City will submit the plans and photos of City Hall to the Mass. Historic Commission for review and comment before putting the construction portion of the project out to bid. Under this timeline, the City would put the project out to bid in the spring of 2020, with construction beginning that summer.

Funding Request:

\$127,500 (\$96,000 Construction Estimate; \$31,500 Program Delivery)

The budget for construction was determined by a professional construction estimator with 20 years of experience. The program delivery budget was determined by the City's grant consultant based on his 25 years of CDBG management experience.

Program Management:

Upon notice of grant award, the Town will immediately procure the services of a grant consultant to manage the FY 2019 Grant. The grant consultant will staff the Community Development Office (CDO) with a Community Development Director, Program Manager, Rehabilitation Specialist and Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper. The CD Director will work under the direction of the Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development to administer the grant and manage the project.

ABR Project oversight will be provided by personnel in the Department of Public Works, which is the City department responsible for building maintenance.

Project Location:

Amesbury City Hall is located at 62 Friend Street, Amesbury, MA 01913.